



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Program
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MASSACHUSETTS THREATENED ANIMALS

Pine Barrens Zanclognatha *Zanclognatha martha*

Description: The Pine Barrens Zanclognatha is a brownish moth with a wingspan of about an inch (two specimens were measured at 24 and 28 mm). They have pronounced markings especially along the leading edge of the wings. The forewings are mousy-grey brown (one observer referred to a deep purplish hue to wings): the outer quarter is darkened with interrupting dark brown zigzagging lines one-third and two-thirds along the wing. There is usually a dark spot in the discal cell (an area of the wing extending from near the point of attachment to the middle). The hindwings are uniformly tan-chocolate brown, with or without a faint medial band.

Range: This species is very common in parts of New Jersey and is found at two locations in Pennsylvania, and single locations in Virginia, New York and New Hampshire, as well as several sites in Massachusetts.

Distribution in Massachusetts: Although historically known from Tyngsboro (Middlesex County), this moth is presently known to occur in Massachusetts only in Montague (Franklin County), Fort Devens, Ayer (Worcester County), and Westover ARB, in Chicopee (Hampden County).

Habitat: In most cases this species prefers maturing pitch pine stands on sandy soil. All of the areas from which it has been reported in Massachusetts have older pitch pine trees with patches of scrub oak and a dense Ericaceous understory.

Life History and Ecology: The larvae of this species have not been reared. They probably feed on pine litter or other detritus.

Threats: The Pine Barrens Zanclognatha is listed as state Threatened due to its limited populations in the state. Threats to its habitat include development, which fragments and reduces the abundance of pitch pine, and fire suppression, which limits the distribution of the pitch pine by allowing species that are less fire tolerant to grow and shade out the pitch pine. Too frequent fires could also be a threat if the pitch pine is not able to mature.

Recommendations: The pitch pine woodlands habitat should be protected and maintained. Current populations should be monitored and searches for new populations should be made.

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